

pathy, and so start well, had basely pretended to be weak, and Edith, in all innocence and womanly tenderness, insisted that he should lean upon her arm. Bradshaw would have been more than human had he resisted such an offer from the lovely young woman who had more than half won his heart. Still, trivial as the incident was, it was enough to put a serious barrier between Edith and George Lester. She was too proud to justify a perfectly innocent action, and he, equally proud, had the question of Edith's fortune brought vividly before him.

The feelings of Edith, when her fit of weeping had abated a little, underwent some change. At first her emotion had been pure grief that the person she loved best on earth could misjudge her so cruelly, but now anger assumed its sway. It was no longer "How could he?" but "How dare he?" He ought to have trusted her implicitly. One thing was certain: nothing could ever bring things back to the old level. Everything was at an end between them.

And what of Lester? He too regarded the one romance of his life as irrevocably ended. It was actually and truly the one romance of his life, for, at an age when most young men are falling in and out of love, he had been making medical history in the African swamps and jungles. Hence, when he did fall in love, he developed the disease seriously. Its symptoms were simple enough. Presently, when the first smart had worn off, he would try to find some scientific explanation of it, probably coming to the conclusion that the severity of his attack was due to the fact that he had not been "immunized" by previous inoculation from Cupid's shafts.

At first he decided to leave Arncliffe at once and seek distraction in travel and hard work. He even went so far as to pay his bill at the inn and send the bulk of his luggage to the station. Then he remembered that the mystery of Lord Arncliffe's death was still unsolved, and while that was the case Edith remained in peril. No, he must remain and see it out.

While he was coming to this decision, Edith was alarming herself with the possibility that he might go away and never, never return. He had looked dreadfully ill. Edith, with a shudder, recalled Bradshaw's expressive opinion of Lester's state. She proceeded forthwith to kill her lover with typhoid fever, at the same time drawing so moving a picture of herself living alone and unwed, for his dear sake, that she began to weep again with unimpaired vigor.

There came a sharp tap at her door, and she sprang up, instinctively putting her hands to her hair and rushing to the looking-glass.

"What is it?" she called. "I am dressing."

"A young lady has arrived, miss, and she is waiting—"

"No, she is not," broke in a clear, musical voice. "Here I am, Edith. Do let me in, there's a dear!"

Edith ran eagerly to the door. The next instant she was clasped in the arms of a radiant young beauty, who greeted her with genuine affection. This was the friend to whom Edith had written in one of the letters purloined by Bradling.

"You poor darling!" exclaimed the visitor breathlessly. "I could not wait down-stairs. I felt I had to come to you at once."

"How good of you to come, dear Phyllis!" said Edith, returning her affectionate glance. "I have not been able to exchange two ideas with a woman for ages. Mrs. Aingier, the wife of my trustee, has taken it into her head to regard me as a monster of iniquity; and although Mrs. Warren the housekeeper has shown me many thoughtful kindnesses, she is so unemotional that one might as well make friends with a fish."

"I know," nodded Phyllis; "I saw her—a stately old party with a face like a graven image. She looked respectful disapproval when I rushed up here without even waiting to be properly announced. But tell me all about yourself—why, you bad girl! I do believe you have been crying!"

There was a marked contrast between the two girls. While "beautiful" was the term invariably applied to Edith, no one ever thought of calling her companion anything but "pretty." And ravishingly pretty she was—small, but exquisitely proportioned, and having that deadly combination of demure eyes and a saucy mouth which works such terrible havoc upon impressionable man. She was in fact a shameless breaker of hearts.

Edith's lips began to quiver again. Phyllis drew her to her side with motherly tenderness.

"There now," soothingly, "tell me all about it.

Surely you are not allowing the tittle-tattle of a lot of spiteful and envious people to upset you?"

"No, it is not that."

"But, Edith," interrupted her friend severely, "you are not going to tell me you are crying on account of a mere man? I have a shrewd suspicion that your dear doctor is responsible for all this."

Edith's pride came to the rescue. She would not have it supposed she was wearing the willow on Lester's account. "Oh dear, no!" she said with an indifference that was perhaps a little too marked. "There is absolutely nothing between Dr. Lester and myself."

"That settles it," remarked Phyllis, nodding her head with an air of sage conviction. "My dear girl, I have been in love thousands and thousands of times, while I positively believe this precious doctor is the first man you have ever looked at twice. Your child-like efforts to deceive me are quite useless, so you had better tell me the truth. Besides, I am counsel's opinion in matters of this sort." Herein Miss Phyllis did herself no more than justice, for she was probably the most outrageous flirt in the Three Kingdoms.

"Oh, Phyllis," murmured Edith, abandoning her policy of concealment, "he has treated me so cruelly, so infamously!"

"I know, I know," answered the expert soothingly; "they always do. But what has he done? There is not another woman, is there?"

"Certainly not!" said Edith scornfully. "Do you suppose I would waste a second thought upon any man who could be capable of such conduct?"

"Don't be too trustful, my child. Men are capable of anything. However, if there is not another woman in the case, the obvious and only conclusion is that there is another man."

"Phyllis! how dare you?" Edith's cheeks were aflame with indignation.

"Pooh! Bless its good little heart! Did it never have a flirtation in all its life? Come, now, tell me about the other man. Why, an occasional touch of jealousy will do your excellent doctor a world of good!"

Thus adjured, Edith told the story of her stroll

in the grounds with Bradshaw and the subsequent misconception put upon her action by Lester, and not until the end of her story was reached did she become aware that her sworn friend was convulsed with merriment.

"I did not expect this, of you at least, Phyllis," said Edith, deeply hurt.

"Oh, you dear baby—you will kill me! Why, don't you see that this is one of the best things that could have happened? Your doctor is probably calling himself a brute by this time, and thinking of all sorts of plans for a reconciliation. Now, when you meet him, you must have a sort of 'wounded animal' look in your eyes, and yet bear yourself with pathetic dignity. You must avoid being alone with him, because that would precipitate matters. And of course you want to torture him."

"I don't!" exclaimed Edith with real indignation.

"Be quiet! Yes, you do. And then at last, when you have forgiven him, he will be so abject that you can get him right under your thumb. After that," concluded this implacable chastener of man, "it will be your own fault if you ever let him get up again."

"But I do not want him to be tortured and abject and under my thumb," repeated Edith emphatically. "I could not respect such a man!"

"Are you afraid of him?" asked Phyllis bluntly. Edith looked startled and blushed. "Yes," she whispered, "I suppose I am a little bit afraid of him."

"I see—and you rather like it, I expect. I know the type of person—horrid square jaws and mouth cut out of granite. Nasty creature! However, you are evidently quite hopeless. But what a strange thing it is that you, who ordered people about as though you were a queen, and always seemed to get your own way, should glory in having some one to domineer over you."

"Oh," rejoined Edith proudly, "I like a man to be a man! How beautifully fresh and elegant you look," changing the subject. "No one would dream that you had been traveling all night."

"My dear simpleton, when I had to change at Newcastle I replaced my traveling dress with this and underwent a general course of renovation. I was not going to risk meeting some nice man before I had time to make myself presentable."

"Always men—you shameless flirt!" said Edith, with an indulgent smile.

"Of course," said Phyllis coolly. "And that reminds me, I had to make my choice between beautifying and breakfast. With Spartan resolution, I chose the first. I have had nothing except a glass of milk and an unutterable bun, and I am simply starved."

"Shall we breakfast alone together this morning?" asked Edith. "I generally join Mr. and Mrs. Aingier, now he is convalescent; but—"

"How old is Mr. Aingier," interrupted Phyllis.

"Nearly sixty."

"No other men?"

"No. Mr. Bradshaw has gone to bed again."

"Then we will breakfast with them, by all means. I should not like any presentable young man to see me eat such a meal as I intend to dispose of. But of course an elderly personage, and married too, does not count."

Which, however, did not prevent her from playing upon the old solicitor with a pair of big trustful eyes. She could not, for the sake of her, avoid this operation. Naturally, the big, trustful eyes inspired Mrs. Aingier with anything but trust, and she regarded this brazen creature with a growing dislike which nearly culminated in an outbreak when her husband patted the curly brown head with a fatherly hand.

CHAPTER XVIII.

An Unexpected Club

THREE days had elapsed since Phyllis Harland's arrival at Arncliffe Hall, and during all that weary time George Lester had failed to put in an appearance. Had this lovers' quarrel merely been a case of ordinary jealousy, the happy prophecy of Edith's friend would probably have been fulfilled by Lester seeking an explanation. Unhappily, the suggestions of the old lawyer as to the suitability of a match between Edith and Lord Arncliffe's nephew had set up a barrier unsuspected by that lively student of the wretch man, Miss Harland.

Edith grew a little more pale and held her head yet a little more erect, but she no longer sought

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B E D T I M E

Drawing by Grace G. Wiederseim



By Margaret
Gebbie Hays

Mother says the baby birdies
In their nests are sleepin' sound;
No good little boy or girlies
Wide awake can now be found.

In my little "comfy" nightie,
With my curls all tied up tight,
And my bed-room candle lighted,
I have come to say "Good-night."